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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/862,754	05/21/2001	Carroll W. Creswell	2000-0203	8168

7590 08/02/2004

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EXAMINER

BRANCOLINI, JOHN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2153

DATE MAILED: 08/02/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/862,754

Applicant(s)

CRESWELL ET AL.

Examiner

John R Brancolini

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 21 May 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on May 21, 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

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DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-23 are pending in the application.

Priority

No claim for priority has been made. The effective filing date of the application is May 21, 2001.

Specification

Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because of the repetition of the title in the wording of the first line. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States

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only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 5-6, 8-12, 20-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Sammon et al. (US Patent 6563914), hereinafter referred to as Sammon.

In regards to claim 1, Sammon discloses a system for facilitating sequenced communications to members of a defined group, the system comprising an application interface implemented in software and accessible to a communicating user connected to a telecommunication network, wherein the interface enables the communicating user to initiate a single communication session in which the communicating user is sequentially stepped through separate communications in a sequential communication session to each of a plurality of members in the defined group, without the communicating user having to initiate separate communication sessions for each member (Figure 2 shows an overview of the display of the sequential communications session, where a user can select a plurality of users to participate in a single communications session, the system stepping through each individual communication link separately, as can be seen in figure 4, an overview of the entire system is given on col 4 line 51 to col 5 line 50).

In regards to claim 5, Sammon discloses the interface is displayed on a screen of a device of the communicating user (see figures 2 and 4 for display examples).

In regards to claim 6, Sammon discloses the interface includes an icon, displayed on the screen of the device, for allowing the communicating user to initiate the

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sequential communication session (Figures 2 and 4 shows several icons for initiating and continuing the communication process, figure 5 being a table defining the icons).

In regards to claim 7, Sammon discloses the interface is audio-based and allows the communicating user to initiate the sequential communication session using an audio command (the user is provided with audio commands and information, col 4 lines 20-24, and the commands issued by a user are translated by the server into commands that can control the telephone connection bridge, in the abstract of the Patent).

In regards to claim 8, Sammon discloses the interface provides the communicating user with an ability to enter an instruction to proceed to a next communication in the sequential communication session (when the user chooses to proceed to another user, there is an icon which instructs the program to proceed to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 22-36).

In regards to claim 9, Sammon discloses the system automatically proceeds to a next communication in the sequential communication session once a prior communication in the session has terminated (if a user wishes to not join the conference, they have the option to, and the program proceeds to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 8-21).

In regards to claim 10, Sammon discloses the interface provides the communicating user with an ability to enter an instruction to skip a next communication

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in the sequential communication session (when the user chooses to skip to another user, there is an icon which instructs the program to proceed to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 22-36).

In regards to claim 11, Sammon discloses the separate communications are made in real-time (the communications are real-time phone calls).

In regards to claim 12, Sammon discloses the telecommunication mode is a telephone call or an instant message (the communications are real-time phone calls).

In regards to claim 20, Sammon discloses software for facilitating sequenced communications to members of a defined group comprising: an application interface module for providing a communicating user with an interface, the interface enabling the communicating user to initiate a single sequential communication session in which the communicating user is sequentially stepped through separate communications to each of a plurality of members in the defined group, without the communicating user having to initiate separate communication sessions for each member; and a communication interface module for effecting communication between the communicating user and the members within the group using at least one telecommunication mode (Figure 2 shows an overview of the display of the sequential communications session, where a user can select a plurality of users to participate in a single communications session, the system stepping through each individual communication link separately, as can be seen in figure 4, an overview of the entire system is given on col 4 line 51 to col 5 line 50)..

In regards to claim 21, Sammon discloses the application interface module displays the interface on a screen of a device of the communicating user (see figures 2 and 4 for display examples).

In regards to claim 22, Sammon discloses the application interface module provides the communicating user with an ability to enter an instruction to proceed to a next communication in the sequential communication session (when the user chooses to proceed to another user, there is an icon which instructs the program to proceed to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 22-36).

In regards to claim 23, Sammon discloses the communication interface module automatically proceeds to a next communication in the sequential communication session once a prior communication in the session has terminated (if a user wishes to not join the conference, they have the option to, and the program proceeds to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 8-21).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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Claims 2-4, 16-19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sammon in view of Detampel, Jr et al. (US Patent 5995608, hereinafter referred to as Detampel).

In regards to claim 2, Sammon fails to disclose a database for storing telecommunication address information relating to at least one communication mode for each group member.

Detampel, however, discloses a system for on-demand teleconferencing which maintains a user database, the user database including information for each subscribed user of the system including contact information and email address. Detampel shows that providing this database increases convenience for a user, and also allows a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user (col 7 lines 54-65 of Detampel).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Sammon to include a database for storing telecommunication address information relating to at least one communication mode for each group member as taught by Detampel to increase the overall convenience of the system and also allow a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user.

In regards to claim 3, Sammon fails to disclose a database that stores telecommunication address information relating to a plurality of telecommunication modes for each group member.

Detampel, however, discloses a system for on-demand teleconferencing which maintains a user database, the user database including information for each subscribed user of the system including contact information and email address. Detampel shows that providing this database increases convenience for a user, and also allows a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user (col 7 lines 54-65 of Detampel).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Sammon to include a database which stores telecommunication address information relating to a plurality of telecommunication modes for each group member as taught by Detampel to increase the overall convenience of the system and also allow a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user.

In regards to claim 4, Sammon discloses the interface provides the communicating user with the ability to select the telecommunication mode for the sequence of separate communications (as can be seen in figures 2 and 4, the interface provides the user with the option of selecting to contact the member with a telephonic call).

In regards to claim 16, Sammon discloses a system for providing sequenced communications comprising: a server, accessible to a communicating user over a telecommunication network, the server comprising software for providing an interface to the communicating user, wherein the interface enables the communicating user to

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initiate a single sequential communication session in which the communicating user is sequentially stepped through separate communications to each of a plurality of members in the defined group, without the communicating user having to initiate separate communication sessions for each member (Figure 2 shows an overview of the display of the sequential communications session, where a user can select a plurality of users to participate in a single communications session, the system stepping through each individual communication link separately, as can be seen in figure 4, an overview of the entire system is given on col 4 line 51 to col 5 line 50).

Sammon, however, fails to disclose a database for storing telecommunication address information relating to at least one telecommunication mode for each of a plurality of members in a defined group.

Detampel, however, discloses a system for on-demand teleconferencing which maintains a user database, the user database including information for each subscribed user of the system including contact information and email address. Detampel shows that providing this database increases convenience for a user, and also allows a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user (col 7 lines 54-65 of Detampel).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Sammon to include a database for storing telecommunication address information relating to at least one communication mode for each group member as taught by Detampel to increase the overall convenience of the system and also allow a higher level of security as the database also includes login information for each user.

In regards to claim 17, Sammon discloses the interface is displayed on a screen of a device of the communicating user (see figures 2 and 4 for display examples).

In regards to claim 18, Sammon discloses the interface provides the communicating user with an ability to enter an instruction to proceed to a next communication in the sequential communication session (when the user chooses to proceed to another user, there is an icon which instructs the program to proceed to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 22-36).

In regards to claim 19, Sammon discloses the system automatically proceeds to a next communication in the sequential communication session once a prior communication in the session has terminated (if a user wishes to not join the conference, they have the option to, and the program proceeds to the next sequential user, col 5 lines 8-21).

Claims 13-14 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sammon in view of Horibe et al. (US Patent 6101532), hereinafter referred to as Horibe.

In regards to claims 13 and 14, Sammon fails to disclose the communications are not made in real time, utilizing an email message or voice mail message.

Horibe discloses a conference system where the participants communicate via non real-time communications modes using email messages (col 2 line 30 – col 3 line

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36 for complete system overview). Horibe teaches that including non real-time communications is convenient to a conference system as it allows a user an extended period of time to review the information before responding.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Sammon to include the communications are not made in real time, utilizing an email message or voice mail message as taught by Horibe to allow users an extended period of time to review the information before responding.

Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sammon in view of Horibe as applied to claims 13-14 above, and further in view of Kitahara et al. (US Patent 5745711).

In regards to claim 15, Sammon in view of Horibe fails to disclose the system provides the communicating user with the ability to create common content for inclusion in each of the separate communications.

Kitahara however, discloses a system of conferencing where documents can be shared between various users (col 3 lines 12-19 show a detailed look at sharing the common content, or a common document). Kitahara shows this is useful as several participants can be reviewing the document simultaneously and commenting on the document during the conference call.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Sammon in view of Horibe to include providing the communicating user with the ability to create common content for inclusion in each of the separate communications as taught by

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Kitahara to allow several participants to review the document simultaneously and comment on the document during the conference call.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John R Brancolini whose telephone number is (703) 305-7107. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenton Burgess can be reached on (703) 305-4792. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


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